under Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme, revival of Rural Infrastructure Development Fund, launching schemes for repair, renovation and restoration of all water bodies, developing horticulture and improving water management. To give further boost to capital investments in rural areas, a programme for creation of rural infrastructure under Bharat Nirman has been initiated in 2005-06. National Rural Employment Guarantee Programmes launched in selected backward districts is also intended to ensure higher wage employment and promote creation of productive assets in rural areas. In addition, allocation for Backward Region Grant Fund has also been stepped up. The various programmes/measures are expected to increase capital investment in the villages and promote their development.

Raising of tax GDP ratio by weaker States

2321. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have advised the financially weaker States to raise their tax GDP ratios and make effective use of funds in the social sectors;

(b) if so, the details of such States identified and the progress so far achieved in this direction;

(c) whether Government have also advised the weaker States to enact the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act which would enable them to borrow directly from the market; and

(d) if so, the response from each State received so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) and (b) Subsequent to acceptance of the recommendation of the Twelfth Finance Commission (TFC) with respect to the Debt Consolidation and Relief Facility (DCRF), Government of India has issued detailed guidelines on the scheme. Under these guidelines, Government of India has requested all State Governments whether financially weak or otherwise to keep in view various suggestions of TFC to improve the financial position of States, including widening of tax base to achieve the tax growth rates projected by TFC for States. Government of India has also requested all State Governments to make Plan and Non-Plan Outlays outcome oriented, in the interest of making public expenditure productive and transparent.

(c) Under the States' Debt Consolidation and Relief Facility, all State Governments are required to enact the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act to enable them to become eligible for the consolidation and relief facility recommended by TFC. However, enactment of such a legislation will inter-alia improve the credibility of states to borrow from the market directly.

(d) So far, 18 States have enacted their Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act.

Opening of bank branches in Juhapura, Ahmedabad

2322. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in Juhupura, a locality of the city of the Ahmedabad, with a population of two and a half lakhs, no bank has opened its branch,

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact the poor people of that area are denied any banking facility; and

(d) if so, what are the remedial measures being proposed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRIPAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (d) Ahmedabad is a metropolitan centre having 475 branches of commercial banks. There are 592 branches in Ahmedabad District as a whole and the average population per branch coverage is 9926.

In terms of the current Branch Authorisation Policy announced by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on September 8,2005 banks have the freedom to select centers for opening of new branches and they are encouraged to open branches in underbanked centers. Further, there is no restriction on banks to service the clients in any locality at a centre.

Posting of working couple

2323. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a policy of Government to post the husband-wife employed under Central Government at the same station to enable them to lead normal family life;